United Nations A/CN.10/PV.279

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission
279th meeting
Tuesday, 10 April 2007, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Rosselli ..... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mr. Grout (Canada): I am honoured to join representatives here today at this session of the Disarmament Commission. The Canadian delegation looks forward to a productive discussion over the coming weeks. We will do our part to work towards a successful outcome.

Each part of the United Nations disarmament machinery has an important role to play. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the forum in which disarmament and non-proliferation treaties are negotiated. The First Committee of the General Assembly is the forum for producing resolutions on topics from the entire field of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

The role of the Disarmament Commission is no less important. It is the deliberative forum in which dynamic and innovative ideas can be discussed frankly and openly by all United Nations Member States. Some ideas may gain momentum and help make concrete contributions to non-proliferation and disarmament efforts in the fields of conventional weapons as well as weapons of mass destruction.

Notable contributions to international disarmament that originated in the Disarmament Commission include the 16 verification principles and guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. To see how both of those topics remain at the forefront of work in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament, one need only attend a session of the Commission to see how the topic of verification has been prominent in discussions on a fissile material cut-off treaty or observe a session of the First Committee to note how the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in many regions of the world continues to be promoted and celebrated.

(spoke in French)

According to the agenda before us, this session of the Disarmament Commission has two important tasks before it: first, to make recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and, secondly, to establish confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Both topics are of utmost importance to the international community.

Nuclear weapons are possessed by relatively few States, but they can nonetheless indiscriminately kill tens of thousands of people or destroy entire cities in one attack. Conventional weapons are much more widespread, and the sum of the death and misery they cause throughout the world every year rivals the terrible loss of life that could result from the use of a nuclear weapon.

(spoke in English)

On the subject of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Canada has reviewed the Chair's non-paper and has provided comments. Generally speaking, it is Canada's view that the Working Group should strive to produce a substantive document that is both

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comprehensive and focused. Our efforts would be best placed on developing principles and recommendations for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament as opposed to other related issues, which may also be important but need not be specifically addressed in this document.

Canada recommends that the paper draw from the 13 practical steps towards nuclear disarmament, as agreed by the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The majority of the steps remain relevant today and have yet to be fully implemented. Particular attention should be given to achieving the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, universal acceptance and full implementation of comprehensive safeguards agreements and the Additional Protocol, and the successful negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

On the topic of a fissile material cut-off treaty, Canada is hopeful that the Conference on Disarmament will achieve a consensus on the draft decision by the six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament on a work plan for the 2007 session that includes the resumption of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We urge all member States of the Conference to support the draft decision of the six Presidents, which would get the world's treaty negotiation forum back to productive work.

Combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is also a priority for Canada. Canada supports the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and welcomes the adoption in the First Committee last fall of the omnibus resolution on small arms and light weapons, which, among other things, has scheduled a biennial meeting of States to be held no later than 2008. The humanitarian impact of the proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons requires concerted attention at the global level. To that end — as announced at the conclusion of the 2006 United Nations Review Conference — Canada is working with other countries to host an informal meeting which will take place from 27 to 31 August 2007 in Geneva. That informal meeting will complement the United Nations process on small arms by strengthening implementation of the Programme of Action and serving to increase the effectiveness of the next Biennial Meeting of States.

(spoke in French)

With regard to conventional weapons, the States Members of the United Nations recently took a step that could considerably strengthen confidence, declaring themselves in favour of opening discussions leading to negotiations on a legally binding international arms trade treaty covering all conventional weapons. Canada fully supports that initiative and calls on Member States to work together creatively and cooperatively to establish common parameters for the international trade in conventional arms.

(spoke in English)

In conclusion, the Canadian delegation looks forward to participating in discussions and negotiations in both Working Groups. We are committed to working in cooperation with you, Sir, the Bureau and fellow member States to ensure that the Commission produces concrete recommendations that advance the goals of non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons, as well as establishing confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Allow me to extend the felicitations of the Pakistan delegation to you, Sir, on your election as well as to the other members of the Bureau. It is a special pleasure to see a friend presiding over this important Commission. We assure you and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups of our full support and cooperation.

Pakistan associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

As we all know, the Disarmament Commission was created at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament to serve as a forum for United Nations Member States to deliberate on major disarmament issues. The concept was that the Commission could identify issues and, if possible, prepare the ground for multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Some may say that the Commission has not lived up to its potential; but that is also the case with regard to the rest of the United Nations disarmament machinery. This is not a failure of the disarmament machinery; it is a failure of political will to advance on the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The impasse reflects the political reality. The consensus on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has virtually broken down. The most visible and recent manifestations of this breakdown were the absence of any agreement on disarmament at the 2005 World Summit, the absence of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament and the absence of an outcome at the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation has broken down over time owing to several negative developments. First, none of the five NPT nuclear-weapon States appears ready to forswear nuclear weapons. Second, some nuclear-weapon States are seeking to develop new nuclear weapons, contravening their commitments and increasing the danger of the use of nuclear weapons. Third, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was supposed to be a central pillar for the advancement of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, has no realistic prospect of coming into force any time soon. If new nuclear weapons are developed, resumed nuclear testing cannot be ruled out.

Fourth, the three nuclear-weapon States which are outside the NPT are also proceeding with the development and deployment of nuclear-weapons systems. Fifth, a fourth State, having left the NPT, has demonstrated its nuclear explosives capability. Sixth, in this climate of eroding consensus, over 20 States possess the technological capability to develop nuclear weapons within weeks or a few months. Seventh, other States have recently expressed new interest in nuclear technology. Some nuclear programmes of NPT States parties are viewed with concern and suspicion and are the object of coercive measures by the Security Council, as well as unilaterally.

Eighth, large stocks of fissile material exist in varying degrees of State control in many countries, including the nuclear-weapon States, the three ex-NPT States and those of NPT parties. Ninth, there is growing fear that non-State actors and terrorist organizations may develop the organizational skills to steal, if not produce, fissile materials for use in a dirty bomb. Tenth, the discriminatory application of non-proliferation norms is eroding the diminishing commitment of States to those norms.

Eleventh, the demonstrated failure of coercion, and even of military intervention, as a tool for counter-proliferation, together with the discriminatory use of non-proliferation norms, could embolden further breakouts from the NPT. Twelfth, the failure to take account of the underlying security preoccupations of States has also propelled proliferation. Thirteenth, the accentuation of the asymmetries between the major Powers and smaller States — for example through the development of anti-ballistic missile systems at the tactical, theatre and, soon, strategic levels; the steady militarization of outer space; and the build-up of conventional forces by major Powers — have reduced the disincentives against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and increased the incentives for threatened States to acquire nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) capabilities.

Given the growth in the number of States possessing nuclear weapons, rising regional tensions, reliance on doctrines justifying the battlefield use of nuclear weapons, the ongoing development of useable weapons, the erosion of nuclear security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States and growing power asymmetries, the danger of the use of nuclear weapons today is as high as it was at any time during the cold war.

It is in that grim context that the Disarmament Commission could and should seek to halt, if not reverse, some of the negative trends. While recognizing that consensus-building will be a difficult task, let me try to attempt an identification of some of the issues which the Commission could closely consider with a view to developing a new consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation.

In developing a new approach, we must start from a basic premise: the recognition of the right to equal security for all States. The Declaration adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (General Assembly resolution S-10/2, part II) adopted the principle of equal security for all States, both in the non-conventional and conventional fields and at both the regional and the international levels.

Second, in our interdependent world, equal security for States can be promoted collectively and multilaterally only, not through national means or within restricted groups, no matter how powerful.

Third, we must address the motives and compulsions that drive States to acquire weapons of mass destruction. These motives include perceived threats from superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States, and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

Fourth, it is in the long-term interest of nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate a renewed commitment to achieve nuclear disarmament within a reasonable time frame. Without such a commitment, the NPT bargain will continue to erode. In any case, with large inventories of conventional weapons and no disputes between them, the major Powers do not need large arsenals of nuclear weapons. The eventual objective must be the total elimination of nuclear weapons within the context of an invigorated collective security system. The Conference on Disarmament should adopt a balanced programme of work to promote nuclear disarmament, not merely cut-offs, and should elaborate measures to halt a new arms race, especially in outer space.

Fifth, we need to develop an agreed approach for the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under appropriate international safeguards, in accordance with the international obligations of States and on a non-discriminatory basis. The advances in technology, as well as an improved International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections regime, have made it possible to promote proliferation-resistant nuclear energy. However, in building a new inspections regime, it would be vital to ensure that it is applied equitably, to both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, in accordance with their obligations.

Sixth, until nuclear disarmament is achieved, non-nuclear-weapon States should have the assurances that they will not be threatened with the use or the threat of use of nuclear, or even conventional, weapons. The security assurances offered by nuclear-weapon States need to be translated into a universal, unconditional and legally binding treaty. At the same time, nuclear-weapon States need to commit themselves not to develop and deploy new and useable nuclear weapons that would increase the nuclear threat and set off a new nuclear arms race.

Seventh, steps are needed to establish a stable and balanced security environment in sensitive regions such as South Asia. This would involve adequate nuclear restraints and non-proliferation measures, a stable conventional balance and the resolution of underlying security problems and threats. The multiplication of discrimination will not help in such regional stabilization.

Eighth, all States must commit themselves to implement agreed measures to prevent non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) was a first and urgent step. It is important that that resolution and the restricted regimes such as the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) be universalized through the elaboration of appropriate treaties.

Ninth, it is important to normalize the relationship of the three non-NPT nuclear-weapon States with the non-proliferation regime and secure their support for a revitalized non-proliferation regime. Reality and legality should be reconciled. Again, such normalization cannot be achieved by multiplying discrimination and double standards.

We hope that the Commission is enabled to reconcile and reverse the trends I have just outlined, and that it will begin to develop a new security consensus that addresses the issues of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in a balanced manner. Pakistan has circulated a working paper which we hope can help in the development of such a new consensus. A good example of building such a multilateral consensus was demonstrated last year in Geneva when the Sixth Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) succeeded in agreeing on a substantive outcome under the presidency of Pakistan. We are equally confident that this Commission, under your leadership, Mr. Chairman, can also replicate the BWC example in the nuclear arena.

Mr. Minami (Japan): At the outset, allow me to extend my delegation's warmest congratulations to the Chairman, Ambassador Rosselli, and the Bureau countries, on their assumption of these important posts. These roles are crucially important to our work to produce meaningful and concrete recommendations next year, based on our deliberations in the current session. We believe that continuing the active debates of last year is critical to achieving this objective. The Japanese delegation, which strongly hopes that the Disarmament Commission will make every effort this

year to demonstrate to the international community that it is fully performing its mandated function, assures the Chair of our strong support in his endeavours to steer this year's session to a successful outcome.

The international community is facing numerous difficulties in the steady and effective advancement of global disarmament. it will by no means be simple to overcome these difficulties. In order to realize humanity's earnest wish for a more peaceful and secure world, however, we must further strengthen the efforts we have made so far and take steady, step-by-step measures for achieving this goal.

If we look back at the past 12 months since our last deliberations, we can perceive a new breath of life being injected into the field of disarmament. A number of these positive movements deserve mention.

In the area of weapons of mass destruction, the Sixth Review Conference of States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) that took place in Geneva last year was hailed as a success. The normalization of the BWC process is particularly noteworthy, since it had been unable to adopt a final document for more than a decade.

In the area of conventional weapons, at the Third Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) held in November last year, the States parties unanimously adopted a final document that included commitments towards the implementation of the Convention and compliance with its obligations. Furthermore, in December, an overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations adopted a new General Assembly resolution on the arms trade treaty (resolution 61/89), of which Japan was a co-author.

Likewise, at the Conference on Disarmament, it is reassuring that the focused and substantive debates of the 2006 session have been actively continued this year. Japan strongly hopes that the Six Presidents (P6) proposal currently on the table will be adopted as early as possible in order to get the Conference on Disarmament back to substantive work as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. To that end, we encourage all Conference on Disarmament member States to take a forward-looking approach while displaying the necessary flexibility.

In the light of these positive developments in the field of disarmament, it is apparent that there are considerable expectations weighing on the Disarmament Commission. In order to further accelerate this momentum in the disarmament field, we must carry out positive and active deliberations over the next three weeks towards an agreement on beneficial recommendations for next year. We must demonstrate, whenever necessary, the flexibility for achieving this goal. We cannot allow any negative influence on the current momentum, which means we assume a great responsibility. Each country should bear that in mind throughout the current session.

With regard to the issues of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and conventional weapons, I would like to restate my country's basic position in my general statement today. I will detail my country's specific, concrete ideas on each agenda item within the respective Working Groups.

As the only country to suffer atomic bombing, Japan has consistently made nuclear disarmament a top priority. Japan's position is clearly represented by its General Assembly resolution on nuclear disarmament, which advocates a realistic and gradual approach towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Its adoption last year as resolution 61/74, with 167 Member States voting in favour is clear evidence that the international community shares that position.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is confronted by a variety of challenges. Nevertheless, the NPT remains the cornerstone for the realization of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The next NPT review process, which will commence this month, is extremely important, given that the 2005 Review Conference was unable to reach agreement on a substantial outcome document. It was reassuring, therefore, that the participants at the NPT seminar hosted in February by Japan collectively recognized the importance of maintaining the reliability of the NPT. If the 2010 Review Conference is to be guided towards a successful outcome, constructive discussions will be required in the first round of the Preparatory Committee, and Japan, as the Chair-designate, is ready to fulfil its role.

As one of the main supporting pillars of the NPT regime, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of great significance. In addition to jointly convening a Friends of the CTBT Foreign Ministers' meeting here in New York in September last year,

Japan has been making efforts to promote the early entry into force of the CTBT, including by inviting a delegation from a country which has yet to ratify the Treaty to visit Japan in January this year. We once again call upon all the countries that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

Japan is determined to continue its work to intensify the momentum leading up to the fifth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, to be held in September.

Furthermore, Japan will maintain and strengthen its active engagements in this field within the Group of Eight Global Partnership. Disarmament and non-proliferation education will also be continued and encouraged. In addition, Japan will make every effort to further strengthen nuclear security through effective means, such as the universalization of the additional protocols of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

From the perspective of promoting those disarmament efforts, Japan reiterates its condemnation of the nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and emphasizes that a nuclear-armed Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot be tolerated. Although the agreement at the Six-Party Talks in February constitutes progress towards the abandonment by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its nuclear weapons programme, efforts for the full implementation of the September 2005 Joint Statement should be continued.

The necessity of confidence-building among States must be emphasized as an effective approach to tackling conventional weapons, which are actually causing much of the day-to-day destruction around the world. From this perspective, Japan is very pleased that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which is based on our 1991 General Assembly resolution on transparency in armaments, has become well-established as one of the vital international instruments for promoting confidence among States.

During the first part of this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament, vigorous discussions were carried out on transparency in armaments. During those deliberations the delegation of Japan pointed out the relationship between the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and current efforts to create an arms trade treaty. Ensuring the responsible transfer of weapons through an arms trade treaty and duly registering those transfers through the United Nations Register would further improve the reliability of the Register itself. In this light, an arms trade treaty and the United Nations Register are closely connected as practical measures for enhancing international confidence-building.

At the Tokyo Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons hosted by Japan last month, participants from each region of the world also undertook a beneficial exchange of views on an arms trade treaty in the context of effective measures for transfer controls. While continuing to work towards accomplishing the goal of ensuring the responsible transfer of conventional weapons through an arms trade treaty, Japan is committed to cooperating with each country to build greater confidence among States.

Those actions reflect the basic position of Japan, which attaches great importance to the United Nations framework in dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its belief that effective disarmament and non-proliferation can be secured through a multilateral approach aimed at reaching agreement among Member States — including those that produce and possess weapons — particularly in the discussions on conventional weapons, which are closely connected to national security.

It is widely known that Japan, as the only country to suffer nuclear attacks, strongly desires that such events never occur again anywhere on Earth. Above and beyond the example of the resolutions on nuclear disarmament and on small arms and light weapons, Japan is working tirelessly to promote disarmament and non-proliferation as a central pillar of our international diplomacy. Consequently, Japan welcomes the recently adopted resolution on strengthening the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda (resolution 61/257). We hope that that resolution will contribute to greater efficiency in advancing the disarmament agenda, including through the activities of the Disarmament Commission.

Furthermore, while steadily implementing the six measures recommended for improving the effectiveness of the Commission's methods of work agreed upon last year, we must fulfil our primary task

of assisting in the building of a peaceful and stable international community.

Mr. Hunger (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to express, on behalf of my delegation, my pleasure at seeing you, Sir, presiding over the Disarmament Commission, and to assure you of my full cooperation as you carry out your work.

My delegation would also like to express its thanks to the Secretary-General for the overview that he provided and for his support for our work. From the outset, Switzerland has supported the efforts of the Secretary-General in the area of restructuring, and we welcome the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 61/257, entitled "Strengthening of the capacity of the Organization to advance the disarmament agenda". We also very much look forward to working closely together with the new head of the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The Disarmament Commission is now entering the second year of its three-year cycle, and it has already made significant progress in the course of the first year. For my delegation, the objective of this current substantive session is to find a basis on which Member States can negotiate recommendations during the third year. This means formulating the bases on which compromises can be reached. We must, inter alia, avoid taking extreme positions that would make our work even more difficult. In this context, my delegation welcomes the participation of our colleagues from the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. It is in the interests of all disarmament forums to work closely together so as to benefit from each other's findings and expertise.

With respect to the two Working Groups, Switzerland will make a detailed statement later in the session. However, I should like to briefly underline a few points here.

With respect to the agenda item, entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", my delegation would first like to thank the Chairman of Working Group I for the non-paper distributed on 13 March to the States members of the Commission. That summary of principles and recommendations forms a very comprehensive basis for our future discussions.

My delegation would like to recall that Switzerland has always regarded nuclear disarmament and the struggle against the proliferation of nuclear arms as matters that go hand in hand. My delegation therefore very much hopes that with the resumption in May of this year of the review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) we will be able to overcome the setbacks experienced during the 2005 Review Conference. The challenges associated with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation have, in fact, grown even more complex, and my delegation would like briefly to recall some of them.

First of all, the adoption of Security Council resolution 1747 (2007) against Iran on 24 March 2007 constitutes a new phase in the escalation of tensions concerning the Iranian nuclear programme. At the same time, the situation on the Korean peninsula has shown signs of moving in a positive direction over the past few weeks. Switzerland remains firmly convinced that in these two issues, only a diplomatic solution — using multilateral tools — particularly as represented by the International Atomic Energy Agency — can resolve the issues in a manner that is acceptable to all parties and is in the interests of world peace.

Secondly, some nuclear-weapon States have decided to amend their nuclear doctrine and allocate funds for developing or replacing nuclear arms. In Switzerland's view, such decisions are contrary to the spirit of article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. On the one hand, those decisions could neutralize efforts implemented within the scope of article VI and weaken the chances of achieving substantial nuclear disarmament. On the other hand, they place a greater degree of importance on nuclear armament, and that does not make it easier to lessen the degree of attraction of nuclear weapons for countries that dream of possessing them.

Thirdly, the production of energy from nuclear power plants will increase in the future, especially in emerging and developing countries in which there is already a substantial demand for energy. Switzerland is aware that this development could increase the risk of proliferation and will call for the creation of new mechanisms that can simultaneously meet non-proliferation concerns for the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as laid down in article IV of the NPT.

Switzerland feels sure that these challenges can be overcome and that the international community has the necessary tools at its disposal for this purpose. Within this context, we have to do everything in our power to maintain the present momentum aimed at initiating negotiations, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for military purposes.

With respect to Working Group II and the question of specific confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, Switzerland fully supports the idea of focusing on the last meeting document submitted by the Chairman within the scope of our 2006 activities, which considers various proposals put forward at that time and clearly reflects the progress of debates within that Working Group. Basing our activities on this document will permit us to commence our deliberations on a firm footing.

Switzerland attaches particular importance to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Group of Governmental Experts that met last year, in which my country participated, was close to achieving consensus regarding a series of recommendations aimed at improving the Register. My delegation is especially pleased about the creation of a new standardized form concerning the transfer of small arms and light weapons, which could prove to be one of the most useful tools.

The Group of Governmental Experts also noted that the reach of the Register responds to security concerns more strongly in some regions than in others. In this regard, Switzerland supported the idea of creating a new category within the Register relating to small arms and light weapons. Although this proposal was not adopted, Switzerland remains convinced that attaching greater importance to the Register would encourage greater use of this instrument.

The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation is a key instrument in the promotion of trust and transparency among States. In the present situation, the notification measures required for launching missiles or space vehicles appear to us to be especially important. We can only appeal to States signatory to this Code of Conduct to fully meet their obligations relating to notification requirements and the submission of an annual declaration. In view of the importance attached to the question of proliferation of missiles today, effective measures aimed at making this instrument a universal one are needed. Switzerland therefore appeals to those States that have not yet done so to sign this Code of Conduct.

Switzerland is convinced that with the necessary political will, we will be able to achieve progress and create a firm base on which we can make recommendations at the end of our three-year cycle. It is in this spirit, and with a constructive and flexible approach, that my delegation is ready to contribute towards the deliberations of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Islam (Bangladesh): Mr. Chairman, may I begin by congratulating you on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission and, through you the Bureau upon their election. Felicitations are also owed to the Chairs of the two Working Groups. I am confident that the deliberations of the Commission, under your able and skilled stewardship, will reach fruition in effective results. I assure you of my delegation's full support in the proceedings of the Commission's work.

I also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his statement, which reflects his deep commitment to the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation fully endorses the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

This cycle of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission convenes against the backdrop of multiple setbacks crippling the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. Also, as we look back, we find the trail of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts beset by major and self-inflicting letdowns. We even regressed on some fronts, let alone not making new ground.

However, it is not that everything has always been disappointing. Indeed, there have been some flickers of hope, though rare. We saw a modicum of success in 1995 and 2000. The modest progress made in regard to the application of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards has been a welcome development. The Conference on Disarmament last year worked towards an agreed schedule, with particular efforts to reflect the security concerns of all States. We recall the productive sessions of the Disarmament Commission in 1999. In 2006, the Commission succeeded in overcoming the impediments

that prevented substantive discussions during the two previous years. What we need now is to look forward and build on these positive developments.

The best methodology for achieving disarmament and non-proliferation goals is to strive for them in a multilateral framework, in particular by activating the disarmament machinery on two fronts — the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament. In recent years the work of both has shown acute underperformance. We urge the Conference on Disarmament to resume negotiations on a programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and on a verifiable treaty banning fissile materials within a specified time frame. In order to retain the credibility of the disarmament machinery, we need to deliver some sort of agreement on recommendations based on the two agenda items of the Disarmament Commission during its current cycle.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remain the cornerstones of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. We reaffirm the need for full universality of the NPT, the CTBT and other international instruments, without a single exception. Yet regrettably, to date we do not have sufficient ratification of the CTBT for its entry into force. We appeal to the remaining Annex 2 States to ratify it as soon as possible. It is dismaying how the lack of political will on the part of some is eroding the entire NPT regime. We call upon States parties to the NPT to fully implement their obligations under article VI of the Treaty and the commitments of the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences. We urge the remaining States to join the NPT without further delay.

Bangladesh's disarmament and non-proliferation credentials are, as all will agree, impeccable. Despite having nuclear neighbours, we have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first annex-2 nation in South Asia to have signed and ratified the CTBT. We are party to almost all disarmament-related treaties, including the NPT and the CTBT. We have also concluded a Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, including the Additional Protocols. These are tangible testimony to our commitment to the goal of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We reiterate our principled position on disarmament and non-proliferation, as reflected in the outcome document adopted at the fourteenth Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Havana in 2006.

We wish to recall that the greatest threat to humanity comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons, their use or the threat of their use. Only the total elimination of nuclear weapons will provide an absolute guarantee against this threat. We remain deeply concerned at the snail's pace of progress by the nuclear-weapon States towards accomplishing the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. True, some old warheads have been destroyed. But it is alarming that the nuclear-weapon States, instead of disarming, are adding more precision capabilities to their existing stockpiles and are developing new weaponry. This enhances the propensity for their use, with a supposed reduction of collateral damage, thus lowering the nuclear threshold. This is in contravention of the negative security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States. We reiterate our call for a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

If nuclear weapons are perceived to buttress the sense of security and if countries appear to benefit from their possession, a rush for their acquisition will naturally occur. We reaffirm that possession of nuclear weapons can never enhance safety and security, because a nuclear war cannot be won.

Given this fragile disarmament and non-proliferation regime, weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, falling into the hands of terrorists and non-State actors has become a real possibility. Besides, precision capabilities make acquisition and use of these weapons more lucrative to the terrorists, with serious and adverse ramifications. We reiterate that the only foolproof measure to prevent terrorists from laying their hands on weapons of mass destruction is the total elimination of such weapons.

Bangladesh greatly values the regional approach to nuclear disarmament. We appreciate the functioning of all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and call for the establishment of more such zones in troubled parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia. Bangladesh reaffirms the inviolability of peaceful nuclear activities. However, it is disconcerting to note the use of extraneous reasons and the imposition of undue restrictions by some nuclear-weapon States to deny non-nuclear weapon States their right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy and technology. We

strongly advocate the unqualified implementation of the provisions of articles I, II and IV of the NPT in order to uphold the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear activities for peaceful purposes.

The proliferation of conventional weapons, fuelling conflicts and claiming a colossal death toll each year, is not a lesser threat than that posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Out of this growing concern, we reaffirm the importance of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Confidence-building measures, when adopted in a balanced and inclusive manner, have the potential to augment international peace and security by promoting openness, understanding and cooperation and by generating trust among States. Confidence-building measures, therefore, can contribute significantly in advancing the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

The timing of this session of the Disarmament Commission could not be more propitious given the fact that it is taking place just before the start of the next NPT review process. In view of the dismal state of affairs in the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, this presents us with yet another opportunity to make amends for our failures. The series of past debacles must not deter us. We should seize the opportunity to engage in effective deliberations during this session and come up with positive outcomes to form a concrete basis and reference point for the work of the next review conference. Furthermore, all of us, but particularly the nuclear-weapon States, must summon the goodwill and political commitment needed to forge a genuine collective drive for attaining the common goal of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Rachkov (Belarus): I would like to take this opportunity, Sir, to congratulate you upon your election to the post of Chairman of the 2007 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. Mr. Chairman, you may rely on my delegation's support and full cooperation.

Belarus considers the Disarmament Commission to be the important deliberative body that reports to the General Assembly. Notwithstanding the difficulties which the Disarmament Commission faced when discussing all the items on its agenda last year, it is necessary to move forward. At the current stage, further deliberations, conducted in an open and transparent manner, are a necessary prerequisite for reaching success in the future.

At the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit in Havana last autumn, heads of State confirmed that the issues of nuclear disarmament are of a high priority. Efforts aimed at nuclear non-proliferation should be in parallel with simultaneous efforts towards nuclear disarmament and should not be in conflict with the inalienable right of States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. As a member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Belarus shares the Movement's approach to the disarmament and international security agenda and aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of NAM.

As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that voluntarily renounced an opportunity to continue to possess nuclear weapons before joining it, Belarus believes that it is important to maintain the integrity of the Treaty both in terms of promoting a balance between the obligations and responsibilities of member States and in terms of attaching equal importance to all key elements of the Treaty. In order to strengthen the NPT and to maintain the trust and commitment of member States it is necessary to implement not only the Treaty itself but also the agreements reached at the NPT Review Conferences in 1995 and 2000.

In 1999, the Disarmament Commission developed guidelines for establishing nuclear-weapon-free-zones. It is important to note in this regard that last year the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia was signed. My delegation welcomes this step by our partners in Central Asia. We also support the related resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 61/88.

Belarus is convinced that it is necessary to provide legally binding assurances to non-nuclear States. We support efforts aimed at the elaboration of relevant norms of international law. At the same time, we welcome unilateral declarations made by nuclear States with respect to their policies of rejecting the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States.

We would like to express our hope for a productive and focused discussion on the issue of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms that will help to build upon the

substantive document discussed by the Commission last year.

Belarus is convinced that a gradual movement from simple to more complex bilateral and multilateral measures and agreements will provide a good basis for preventing armed conflicts and strengthening national, regional and international security. Confidence-building measures by definition should be based on openness and true cooperation. That is the only possible way of discussing and successfully implementing such measures. At the same time, we share the view that confidence-building measures are neither a substitute nor a precondition for disarmament measures.

On its part, the Republic of Belarus has been pursuing responsible and consistent policies in the field of conventional arms controls. Under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), Belarus has destroyed nearly 10 per cent of all its heavy military equipment under the provisions of the CFE. Belarus was the first State member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to have ratified the CFE Adaptation Agreement in 2000.

Belarus attaches great importance to the elaboration of additional bilateral confidence-building measures on the basis of the 1999 Vienna Document. Political arrangements on additional CBMs have been reached with all neighbouring countries.

The Republic of Belarus fully shares the international community's humanitarian concerns related to illegal small arms and light weapons, as well as to land-mine problems. Belarus continues its work aimed at the elimination of around 3.7 million PFM-1 anti-personnel mines, including cooperation with the European Union and other donors. The elimination of that kind of ammunition is most problematic from the environmental viewpoint and requires cutting-edge technologies.

In conclusion, I would like to express the hope of my delegation for a fruitful and successful 2007 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Mohamad (Sudan): The African Group joins previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 2007 session. We would like to convey a similar sentiment to other members of your Bureau. We are confident that, under your able guidance and leadership, this session of the Commission will conclude with fruitful outcomes. Let me add that we assure you of the full support and cooperation of the African Group.

The Group extends its appreciation to the chairmen of Working Groups I and II for their respective papers, which we believe could serve as a basis for substantive discussions on both agenda items.

The African Group welcomes the Secretary-General to this session of the Disarmament Commission and supports the reorganization of the Department for Disarmament Affairs by the creation of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, to be headed by a High Representative. We hope that this will raise the profile of the Department. The African Group wishes to express appreciation to the Department for Disarmament Affairs for its continued service to Member States in promoting the cause of global disarmament.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and would like to reiterate the following.

The African Group stresses the importance of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative body that examines and discusses specific issues in the field of disarmament and makes recommendations to the General Assembly. On that basis, the African Group considers the current session of the Commission to be very relevant in terms of the overall objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. The Group therefore expects useful recommendations to emerge from this session.

The African Group reaffirms its absolute commitment to multilateral diplomacy and its strong belief in the promotion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament as an essential way of strengthening universal peace and security and the pursuit of our common interests in that area. The Group joins other States members of the Non-Aligned Movement in expressing its deep concern at the growing resort to unilateralism in addressing issues of multilateral interest.

The African Group remains convinced that nuclear weapons pose a great threat to international peace and security and that the most effective means of achieving nuclear disarmament is the commencement

of multilateral negotiations leading to the early conclusion of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, and the threat of use or use of nuclear weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. Among the first steps towards the realization of that objective should be a commitment by nuclear-weapon States to immediately stop the qualitative improvement, development, production and stocking of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Pending the total elimination of those nuclear weapons, a legally binding international instrument should be established under which the nuclear-weapon States would undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. The African Group stresses the importance of ensuring that any meaningful nuclear-weapon disarmament process should be irreversible, transparent and verifiable.

The African Group recognizes that the tenth special session of the General Assembly — the first special session devoted to disarmament — was a turning point in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Group however, regrets the non-implementation of the Final Document of the tenth special session 29 years after its adoption.

The African Group notes the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. It is, however, a matter of deep concern that over the years there has been a lack of progress in that multilateral body, particularly its inability to agree on its programme of work. The Group regrets the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and stresses the need to start negotiations on the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time-frame, leading to a nuclear weapons convention. We are, however, encouraged by recent developments in the Conference, which we hope will lead to sustained progress on the issues before it.

The African Group reaffirms its belief in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a vital instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. While regretting the outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the Group endorses the measures adopted at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences, in particular the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference for systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI of the NPT, including the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI.

The African Group recalls the solemn declaration of the Organization of African Unity on the denuclearization of Africa, adopted at the first Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization, held in Cairo from 17 to 21 July 1964, and General Assembly resolution 2033 (XX), on the denuclearization of Africa, adopted on 3 December 1965. The Group reiterates the need for a balanced and non-selective implementation of the provisions of the NPT, taking into account the commitments undertaken pursuant to article VI of the Treaty. In that respect, the African Group recalls also the inalienable right of the States parties to the NPT to the peaceful use of nuclear energy for economic and social development purposes, as underlined during the African conference on nuclear energy, held recently in Algiers from 9 to 10 January.

The African Group emphasizes the importance of consolidating the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Nuclear-weapon-free zones play an important role in the maintenance of regional peace and security. In that regard, the African Group calls for the early ratification of the Treaties of Pelindaba and Rarotonga by the States of the regions concerned to facilitate their entry into force, and it urges those nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, thus guaranteeing security assurances to the countries of the regions concerned.

The African Group strongly supports the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The Group calls on countries in the region to take practical and urgent steps for the implementation of proposals for the establishment of such a zone. It urges countries of the Middle East to refrain from producing, acquiring or possessing nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices; to also refrain from permitting the stationing of nuclear weapons on their territories by any third party; and to agree to place

their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

In line with the Final Document of the fourteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held at Havana, Cuba, from 14 to 16 September 2006, the African Group reaffirms its long-standing position in favour of the total elimination of nuclear testing. The Group stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, among other actions, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Group reiterates that, if the objectives of the Treaty are to be fully realized, the continued commitment to nuclear disarmament of all States signatories — especially the nuclear-weapon States — will be most essential.

Concerning the second substantive item of the agenda, on confidence-building measures, the African Group remains convinced that the ultimate goal of such measures in the field of conventional arms is to strengthen international peace and security and to contribute to the prevention of war. The Group shares the belief that the essence of confidence-building is to guarantee to States a peaceful and stable political environment in which international relations are governed by clear, predictable and strictly observed norms of international law, which will create conditions that will promote the social, economic and cultural well-being of their peoples.

Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms should fully respect the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The African Group believes that confidence-building measures should not be a substitute or a precondition for disarmament measures and that they should not divert attention from such measures. Confidence-building measures should be developed and applied on a voluntary and reciprocal basis, and they should have as an objective the principle of undiminished security for all. The African Group emphasizes the importance of confidence-building measures at the regional level as crucial to enhancing regional peace and security. The African Group underscores the importance of transparency and the verification process in promoting confidence-building measures in disarmament.

The African Group further notes with deep concern the recent trend of rising global military expenditures — which, according to available information, are likely to exceed $1 trillion this year — and calls for the reduction of military expenditures in order to release funds needed for development, especially the development of the African continent. The Group believes that a reduction of military budgets is an important confidence-building measure that can contribute to global peace and security.

The African Group is deeply concerned about the illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of small arms and light weapons and about their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, especially in Africa. The African Group notes that the first United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects did not produce an outcome document. Nonetheless, it served to highlight the importance of the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action adopted by consensus in 2001, which outlined a realistic, achievable and comprehensive approach to addressing the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and global levels. The African Group reaffirms its belief in the implementation of the Programme of Action as an important confidence-building measure in the field of disarmament.

The Group supports all regional and subregional initiatives in Africa, as well as in other regions, in the fight against the illicit proliferation of small arms. The Group reaffirms its commitment to the Bamako ministerial Declaration of 2000 containing an African common position on the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I congratulate you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on your election as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2007 substantive session, and look forward to the success of the current session under your skilful chairmanship.

Today, the world is hastening an arms race against the expectations for disarmament after the end of the cold war. We are witnessing an increase in

military expenditure every year and in the briskness of arms markets. We feel uneasy and insecure more than ever, watching a powerful country threatening others with nuclear weapons and occupying weak and small countries by force.

The reality shows that responsibilities for disarmament lie mainly with the world Powers. They are increasing military spending. They are profiting from the arms trade. They are inciting an arms race. Specifically, the United States is developing new types of nuclear weapons on the premise of a pre-emptive nuclear strike and expanding the arms race into outer space. As long as there is a nuclear doctrine pursuing the use of nuclear weapons and competition to monopolize the weapons market, the United Nations debate on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will be empty talk, and the wishes for a nuclear-free world and peace cannot be realized.

Today, the world's attention is focused on the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula. The nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula is a direct product of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Bush administration has designated the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as part of an axis of evil and an outpost of tyranny, and threatened a pre-emptive nuclear strike. In such compelling circumstances, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no choice but to make nuclear weapons to counter the constant United States threat of nuclear attack. Last October, it carried out a nuclear test successfully. That is a reasonable exercise of our sovereign right to defend our territory; population and social system from foreign attack and invasion.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is one of the lifetime teachings of the Great Leader President Kim Il Sung, and the consistent position of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains firm and unchanged in its will to implement the joint statement of 19 September 2005 and the agreement of 13 February 2007. We are now doing our best to do what we are expected to do under the agreement. The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency has already visited Pyongyang at our invitation.

The resolution of the nuclear issue depends entirely on the attitude of the United States. The agreement of 13 February was possible only because the United States promised to lift financial sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea within 30 days. However, the money has not reached our hands, although the United States declared a lifting of the sanctions. It is not simply a question of money; it is rather a question of credibility.

The United States is now staging joint war exercises in South Korea against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, despite the 13 February agreement. How can we trust the United States when it speaks of having no intention to attack? War exercises are incompatible with talks. The United States should act upon its words of "reconciliation and normalization" and "peace and stability", refraining from acts hindering the implementation of the agreement and progress of the talks.

If the United States faithfully implements its commitments on the principle of action for action, as agreed by the six parties, the process of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will be smoothly pushed forward. Above all, it should dismantle financial sanctions, the intensive embodiment of the hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We will return to the Six-Party Talks when the question of financial sanctions is fully settled.

Mr. Prasad (India): Please accept my delegation's warm felicitations, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. You have our fullest cooperation. We are confident that, under your guidance, members of the Commission will carry forward their constructive engagement on both the substantive agenda issues, so that the Commission will be in a position to finalize its recommendations on them at our next session, in 2008. We would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Jean-Francis Zinzou of Benin and Mr. Carlos Duarte of Brazil, Chairpersons of Working Groups I and II, respectively, and to compliment them on the work that they accomplished at the 2006 session of the Commission.

India has consistently contributed to the work of the Commission in a positive way. As a deliberative body, the Commission evaluates and assesses the prevailing situation, outlines the objectives of the specific issues it is mandated to discuss, taking into account the concerns and priorities of all its members,

and, based on these, considers and agrees upon principles, guidelines or recommendations. Mindful of this mandate, my delegation will be ready to work with others to enable the Commission to reach its conclusions by consensus on both of the agenda issues.

The tenor and content of the discussions held last year on the mandate of Working Group I, to make recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, focused on our common and ultimate goal: to seek the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The statement read out on behalf of Non-Aligned Movement member States by the delegation of Indonesia yesterday reflects this, as well as the resolute view of United Nations Member States, reflected in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2) and in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2): that nuclear disarmament is the most important issue on the global disarmament agenda.

India remains fully committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, to be realized through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. During the course of last year's discussions, we spelled out India's specific proposals to build a consensus that could strengthen the ability of the international community to move towards the goal of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, which we view as two ends of a single continuum. In order to facilitate consideration of practical steps and recommendations for that purpose, we have separately requested the Commission's secretariat to circulate the text of India's working paper on nuclear disarmament, presented at the sixty-first session of the First Committee of the General Assembly on 6 October 2006 (see A/C.1/61/5, annex), as a working paper of Working Group I. We shall spell out India's perspectives on the ways and means to achieve the twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the deliberations of the Working Group devoted to that issue.

In Working Group II, in considering practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, we not only have the results of the discussions last year, but we also have the inheritance of exchanges on the issue between 2001 and 2003. In our deliberations, we should be mindful of the need to reach consensus, having already had four years of discussions on this issue. We should therefore make every effort to build on the large measure of convergence already achieved.

India fully supports the adoption of bilateral, regional and global confidence-building measures, freely arrived at by the participating States. The core objectives of confidence-building measures include risk reduction, prevention of accidental war, prevention of crises and management of dialogue in times of crisis, and mitigation of misunderstanding and misinterpretation of military activities, thereby promoting a stable environment of peace and security between and among States. India has initiated and concluded a number of unilateral and bilateral confidence-building measures in Asia to build trust and confidence and ensure greater transparency. We are continuing to seek further measures to prevent misunderstandings and promote a stable environment of peace and security with the countries of our neighbourhood. In congruence with our practice, we hope to contribute further to the deliberations of Working Group II.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in his thoughtful address yesterday, spoke of his personal vocation, from his very first day in office, of revitalizing the international disarmament agenda as well as the effectiveness of the United Nations in that area. He said he was looking to this Commission for ideas and leadership. Speaking for my delegation, India is ready to respond to the Secretary-General's call to help reinvigorate the global disarmament agenda. We look forward to working purposefully with other delegations to achieve this.

Mr. Al-Qassemi (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. Chairman, allow me first of all to congratulate you on your work and, through you, to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. We wish you every success and look forward to a positive outcome of this session. The Republic of Yemen would like to express to you, Sir, its wholehearted support and cooperation, in order to ensure that the Conference will succeed in achieving results that will ensure international peace and security, development and prosperity for all peoples.

The Republic of Yemen would like also to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and to stress the importance of turning the Middle East region into a

zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. That, of course, cannot take place without the accession of all countries, including Israel, to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the total abolition of nuclear-weapon programmes and the signing of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) optional protocols and safeguards agreements. In that context, we stress that talk about nuclear non-proliferation will not bear fruit unless all States commit themselves to the provisions of those conventions and instruments and avoid double standards.

My country would like to stress the right of all States, including developing countries, to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, for the good and prosperity of all peoples. The Government of Yemen has worked with all international authorities to implement relevant measures aimed at preventing the illegal introduction of nuclear, fissile or other radioactive material and to strengthen its coast guard in order to prevent trafficking in conventional weapons.

The Government of Yemen, convinced of the importance of these international goals, has put in place measures to control the illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons and has made tireless efforts to establish a national committee for preventing the proliferation of such weapons, consistent with United Nations programmes and instruments.

We strongly believe that international realities impose a choice in favour of international peace and security. Therefore, we stress the importance of transparency, credibility and impartiality in our work in order to prevent any contravention of international law or of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, taking into account the importance of Articles 51 and 2 concerning the inherent right to individual or collective self-defence and a State's right to be free from interference in matters which are essentially within its domestic jurisdiction.

Mr. Owade (Kenya): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 2007 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We have no doubt that the Commission will benefit from your wide diplomatic experience and skill and that you will steer our work at this session to a fruitful outcome.

We associate ourselves fully with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and by the Sudan on behalf of the African Group. However, we wish to expound on a few salient issues on behalf of the Kenyan delegation.

We express our profound disappointment at the general malaise and lack of progress that have characterized the disarmament machinery for many years. It was particularly disappointing that after the Disarmament Commission agreed on a substantive agenda after many years of inactivity, the conclusion of the 2006 session turned out to be a catastrophe. The Conference on Disarmament has yet to agree on a programme of work despite almost two years of focused discussions. The outcome of the 2006 Review Conference on small arms and light weapons was equally disappointing. This is a situation which must not be allowed to continue.

In his keynote address to the opening meeting of this session yesterday, the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, aptly described this situation — in which setbacks have become the norm, not the exception — as unacceptable. We welcome the Secretary-General's commitment to revitalize the disarmament agenda by, among other things, appointing a High Representative to head the new Office for Disarmament Affairs. However, it goes without saying that tangible progress in disarmament and non-proliferation can be achieved only through commitment to the principle of multilateralism and the goodwill of Member States.

The former Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, articulated a vision for the United Nations in the twenty-first century in which we would tackle security, development, and human rights simultaneously. In both "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005) and his 2006 report on the work of the Organization (A/61/1), Kofi Annan underscored the inextricable linkage of these issues. This vision, in our view, cannot be achieved without tangible progress in the field of disarmament. Development targets set forth by the Organization, especially in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals, cannot be achieved without progress on disarmament and non-proliferation.

How can we eradicate poverty when over $1 trillion is still spent on military expenditure each year? How can we hope to achieve the Millennium Development Goals when over 70 per cent of the meagre $10 billion United Nations budget goes towards peacekeeping and other field operations, compared to 50 per cent of a budget that was less than

half that 10 years ago? Is it not one of the greatest ironies of our time that the peace dividend that was expected at the end of the cold war has never materialized? Instead, we have recently witnessed an escalation in military expenditure, including on non-conventional weapons. It is a matter of great concern to my delegation that concerted efforts are being directed towards the modernization of nuclear arsenals and their systems of delivery as well as towards reaffirmation of military doctrines based on those weapons.

It must be emphasized that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination. The status quo is certainly not an option. Similarly, a selective approach designed to address only one aspect — non-proliferation — will not work. Disarmament and non-proliferation are two sides of the same coin and must be tackled simultaneously. As a matter of priority, the nuclear-weapon States should make an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In this regard, negotiations on a legally binding treaty should begin without delay.

We hope that the forthcoming meeting in Vienna of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will agree on a programme of work that will constructively tackle the Treaty's three components: disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of energy. The tendency by nuclear-weapon States to denigrate that third component of the Treaty — the right to peaceful uses of nuclear technology — must be resisted. In this regard, we reiterate the Plan of Action adopted by the African Union, which underscores the inalienable right of African countries to free access to nuclear energy and technology for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the second substantive agenda item, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", we reiterate the salient points articulated by Indonesia on behalf of the NAM yesterday. We only wish to add that as part of these confidence-building measures, the international community must agree on practical measures to control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which continue to wreak havoc and bring destabilization to thousands of civilians, especially on the African continent.

It is for those reasons that Kenya joined six countries from around the world to sponsor resolution 61/89, on an arms trade treaty, at the current session of the General Assembly. We deem it important that the international community should put in place a mechanism for responsible trade in these weapons through a legally binding instrument establishing international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. Pursuant to this resolution, the Secretary-General has sought the views of Member States on the feasibility, scope and draft parameters of a comprehensive and legally binding instrument. Kenya is convinced that an arms trade treaty is feasible and timely. We hope that all Member States will make constructive proposals to the Secretary-General within the timeframe set up for this exercise.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to constructive and fruitful deliberations and assure you of our maximum cooperation in your efforts.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. I am confident that, under your able leadership, we will have a fruitful session this year.

My delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Given the role of the Disarmament Commission as the sole deliberative body on disarmament issues with universal membership, we welcome the Commission's entering the intermediate year of its three-year cycle of in-depth substantive deliberations on nuclear disarmament. In view of certain setbacks and unfulfilled commitments in the disarmament area, it is high time for the Commission to focus on exploring ways and means for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Following the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States and their tragic aftermath, it took the international community more than two decades to come up with collective action in the form of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Treaty was seen as a genuine promise to rid the world of the nuclear weapons nightmare. However, almost four decades after the entry into force of the NPT, real progress towards nuclear disarmament has yet to be achieved.

World public opinion is extremely weary of the continuation of this situation and rightly expects the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete action to fulfil their contractual obligations with regard to nuclear disarmament.

In 1978, the General Assembly, cognizant of the fact that nuclear weapons constitute the gravest threat to international peace and security, adopted the Final Document of the first special session on disarmament, which stressed nuclear disarmament as the highest priority on the disarmament agenda. In our view, nuclear disarmament is a major milestone towards the real objective of the disarmament process: general and complete disarmament.

In recent years, certain developments have presented serious challenges to the objective of nuclear disarmament. Those developments include, inter alia, the persistent refusal of the nuclear-weapon States, especially the United States, to fulfil the agreed 13 practical steps as part of an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish nuclear disarmament; the continuation of nuclear-weapon-sharing arrangements with non-nuclear-weapon States, in contravention of article I of the NPT, particularly through the deployment of nuclear weapons in the European countries members of NATO; the development and testing of new nuclear weapons in laboratory conditions, which run contrary to the spirit and letter of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the transfer of nuclear technology and materials to non-parties to the NPT, in particular the agreement on nuclear cooperation between the United States and Israel, whose nuclear arsenals present the greatest threat to regional and international peace and stability, and the provision to Israeli scientists of access to the United States nuclear facilities, thereby demonstrating the United States total disregard for its obligations under article I of the Treaty; the planned deployment of missile defence systems in various regions and the threat to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States; the advancement of new doctrines to justify reliance on nuclear weapons, especially by stressing the essential role of nuclear weapons as an effective tool for achieving security goals and foreign policy objectives, and targeting non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT; the development of new nuclear weapons systems, and constructing new facilities for producing nuclear weapons; and the resumption of efforts to develop and deploy tactical nuclear weapons, despite the commitment to reverse that process and effectively reduce them.

In short, the NPT nowadays is facing serious threats due to the adoption of a policy of negation, denial and refusal by the nuclear-weapon States, especially the United States, with respect to their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the elimination of their nuclear arsenals. In that context, the United States continues to undermine the integrity and credibility of the NPT by obstructing the follow-up process of nuclear disarmament commitments within the framework of the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, and pursues its own unilateral policies and priorities through more exclusive bodies and groups. We have a collective responsibility to restore the credibility of the NPT. To realize that goal, we need to address such daunting challenges collectively and thoroughly.

The NPT is the foundation of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Our efforts in this body should be directed towards the mutual reinforcement of those interrelated pillars of the Treaty. The current session of the Commission should intensify efforts to adopt concrete recommendations in achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Our endeavours should be guided by the following principles: to maintain and strengthen the integrity of the existing non-proliferation instruments; to reject attempts to undermine the inalienable rights of the States parties; to preserve fully the achievements reached at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences; and to emphasize the authority and credibility of relevant international organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), with regard to the verification of compliance.

The Commission should re-emphasize the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear-weapon States to make systematic and progressive efforts to implement nuclear disarmament, and recommend appropriate measures for its realization. For many years, the Conference on Disarmament has failed to adopt a programme of work due to the lack of political will for negotiations on nuclear disarmament. To overcome that problem, the Commission should recommend the early establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

The threat of use of nuclear weapons by some possessor States is increasingly alarming. The Commission should not turn a blind eye to such dangerous threats and should send a strong message to those States by rejecting such illegal and inhumane policies.

Non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as recognized by the NPT, are of high importance. Those issues should be considered on their own merit, with due attention to the rights and obligations of Member States under relevant provisions of the NPT. Unfortunately, non-proliferation has been manipulated by a few countries as a pretext to advance their narrow national interests and to deprive developing countries of their rights to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

The negation of nuclear disarmament obligations is not the only challenge facing the NPT. Certain nuclear-weapon States, under the pretext of non-proliferation, have attempted to establish new mechanisms and precedents to restrict and deny the inalienable rights of States parties under article IV of the NPT to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Efforts to advance non-proliferation are of the utmost importance. However, ill-intended attempts made under the banner of non-proliferation are increasingly pursued to deprive Member States of the use of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. Such attempts will only exacerbate the existing inequalities that are inherent in the NPT, and consequently lead to the erosion of the integrity of the Treaty and the benefits of adherence to it. Ironically, the same States are proliferating nuclear weapons horizontally and vertically either by transferring nuclear weapons technology and materials to non-parties to the NPT or by developing new types of nuclear weapons or modernizing them.

Thus, the Commission needs to reflect on non-proliferation in all its aspects and recommend certain measures to ensure the critical balance between non-proliferation obligations and the right to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. It should also reflect on reiterating the inalienable rights of States parties to the fullest possible exchange of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes without discrimination, and on enabling the NPT States parties to exercise their full right to develop and produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under appropriate international monitoring and supervision; calling on certain groups of States to remove restrictions incompatible with the relevant international obligations imposed on States parties in the transfer of nuclear material, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes; recognizing the authority of the IAEA as the sole competent international body to deal with the verification of compliance of member States with their respected safeguard obligations in strict observance of the provisions of the IAEA statute; ensuring the full universality of the NPT without a single exception and, in that regard, urging Israel, as the only country in the Middle East that has not yet adhered to the NPT, to accede to it without delay and to place its unsafeguarded facilities under the full scope of the Agency; reiterating the necessity to conclude without delay an international, legally binding instrument on negative security assurances pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons; requiring all States to adhere to multilateralism in addressing issues of non-proliferation in all its aspects; avoiding abuse of United Nations bodies, including the Security Council, as instruments for exerting pressure in order to prevent States parties from exercising their inalienable rights; and strengthening collective and coordinated efforts to prevent proliferation by anyone and anywhere in a non-discriminatory manner, and also to strictly prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

Let me now turn to the issue of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We are of the view that confidence-building measures, if widely applied by all States, could enhance stability, peace and security at the regional and international levels. However, it should be noted that such measures are of a very complex and multifaceted nature. Confidence-building measures are widely considered to be voluntary measures among the concerned parties that should be implemented bilaterally or multilaterally and should not be abused or turned into legally binding measures. The complexity of the issue of confidence-building measures originates from the fact that they will not be effective and universal if the cold-war-era security perceptions of some member States continue to prevail. Almost two decades have passed since the end of the cold war, but, regrettably, thousands of nuclear weapons continue to exist as a means of terrorizing the non-nuclear-weapon States.

Confidence-building measures cannot and should not be seen in isolation from the international security

environment. While some nuclear-weapon States persistently seek absolute security by relying on their nuclear-weapons arsenals, it is unrealistic to believe that our common goal of general and complete disarmament can be realized in the foreseeable future. Therefore, confidence-building measures should be coupled with simultaneous concrete steps towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. To attain such a noble goal, the international community must pursue and advance disarmament in practice rather than in words.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Our session is taking place in an atmosphere of significant transformations in the United Nations system. A new Secretary-General has been elected, and structural changes in the Secretariat, including those involving its disarmament sector, are being discussed. We believe that there should be only one vector for those innovations — the strengthening of multilateral principles in disarmament.

The Russian Federation consistently stands for the strengthening of a central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and international security, genuine disarmament, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, and arms control.

We regret to state that the increased factor of force in global policy and attempts to use it to solve inter-State problems, to the detriment of the political and diplomatic methods and mechanisms of the United Nations, including its Security Council, have an unfavourable effect on the dynamics of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation processes. In such circumstances, more and more States are looking for ways to strengthen their own security by building up their defence capacities, some even by means of missiles and nuclear weapons. That, in turn, results in the unprecedented growth of countries' military expenditures and the development of an arms race. We can efficiently resist such trends only by ensuring the continuity of the interrelated processes of disarmament and non-proliferation, and the persistent strengthening of the international legal basis of collective security.

We are convinced that the emergence of new challenges and threats to international security places particular emphasis on the importance of adherence by States to the obligations they have assumed, and their neutralization should be effected on the basis of the strict implementation of existing international legal documents and the development of new ones. In our view, it is important to promote greater stability in the international legal disarmament framework, to bridge current legal gaps in the field of non-proliferation, and to prevent the creation of a legal vacuum and new areas of confrontation and arms race, including high technology.

Russia is committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons as an ultimate goal. The achievement of that goal is a gradual and complex process in which all nuclear States should participate and which should provide for the maintenance of strategic stability and observance of the principle of equal security for all.

We proceed from the necessity to ensure the predictability, transparency, irreversibility and verifiability of the process of reducing and limiting strategic offensive weapons. We consider nuclear weapons to be a factor of deterrence and oppose lowering the threshold for their use and transforming them into a battlefield weapon. In that context, we are concerned about programmes to develop low-capacity nuclear charges and to equip intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles with non-nuclear warheads.

Russia steadily fulfils its obligations in the field of nuclear disarmament. Thus, since 1991, the total amount of nuclear weapons stocks has been reduced fivefold and the number of nuclear warhead storage places decreased fourfold. We are ready to take further steps in that area on a reciprocal basis.

In that connection, we would like to recall that the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START) will expire in 2009. Simultaneously, article II of the Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions — which provides, in particular, for using the START Treaty to ensure control in the field of strategic nuclear forces — will cease to be in effect. That means that all control over strategic nuclear forces will be terminated. That is why we proposed to the United States to conclude a new agreement to replace the START Treaty. We believe that mere political declarations on confidence-building and transparency measures will not suffice.

Special emphasis should be placed on the relationship between offensive and defensive strategic weapons. An apt observation to that effect was made in

the preamble of the now-defunct Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems. The logic behind it is quite clear: any increase of missile defence capability by one side will impel the other side to respond by building up its strategic offensive weapons.

Because of that vital element, we cannot view the United States global missile defence system out of context, as a purely defensive measure. It upsets the strategic balance and leads to the development of a first-strike capability. The United States missile defence system is being extended beyond that country's national territory, involving some Eastern European countries and, according to United States military officials, Transcaucasia. The deployment of strategic components of the United States military infrastructure in countries adjacent to Russia's borders raises legitimate concerns and requires us to take adequate measures.

The danger of an arms race in outer space is another growing concern. We confirm that Russia's priority at the Conference on Disarmament is to seek the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, vested with a discussion mandate. Agreement to such a mandate would not rule out the possibility of subsequently steering the work onto the path of negotiation.

We have prepared a draft treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects. We regard a future treaty as a guarantee that outer space will not become a new area of confrontation. We are planning to submit shortly the draft treaty for the broad consideration of our partners, as Russian President Vladimir Putin recently declared in Munich. Because of uncertainty regarding the launch of negotiations on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament, we suggest discussing the draft text in the framework of thematic debates. We hope for the active participation of our partners in the discussions. We call on nations that possess outer space potential to follow Russia and other Collective Security Treaty Organization member States by pledging not to be the first to place weapons of any kind in outer space.

Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities can help to enhance security in outer space activities and strengthen international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space. The broad support at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly for the Russian-sponsored resolution on transparency and confidence-building measures confirmed the international community's strong interest in a predictable strategic situation in outer space. We believe that this provides an opportunity to develop and adopt appropriate measures. We call on our partners to facilitate the implementation of that resolution.

Russia strictly observes the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of their Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles (INF) Treaty, which provides for the elimination of two types of land-based missiles with ranges between 500 and 1,000 kilometres and between 1,000 and 5,500 kilometres. We are concerned that, despite the provisions of the INF Treaty, intermediate-range missiles are being manufactured by the United States as target missiles. Furthermore, such missiles are being developed and adopted for service in some other countries. In that connection, we propose considering the elaboration of a universal international legal instrument on that matter to reflect the current realities.

Enhancing the non-proliferation regimes for weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials is another of our priority objectives. We consider it fundamentally important to ensure the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in all its aspects, to enhance its efficiency and to achieve its universality. New challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime can and should be eliminated on the basis of the Treaty itself. In view of the foregoing, we believe that the priority tasks of the preparation process for the 2010 NPT Review Conference are to prove the viability of the Treaty and remove legal gaps in its regime. In our view, the NPT can be enhanced through the following three approaches.

The first approach is to reduce the attractiveness of creating a complete nuclear-fuel cycle by implementing multilateral approaches to the cycle. In that context, Russia has put forward an initiative to establish international centres rendering services in the field of enrichment and aimed at realizing the right of

every State to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We believe that our initiative, the American Global Nuclear Energy Initiative and the six supplier States' proposal concerning guaranteed supplies are possible solutions to the problem. We are ready to work to specify and integrate all the proposals available in that respect.

It is necessary to finalize the work in the Nuclear Suppliers Group aimed at developing criteria to identify the materials of sensitive nuclear technologies and equipment. That would preclude the transfer of such technologies and equipment to any country with respect to which even the slightest doubt exists as to its observance of non-proliferation commitments.

The second approach is to enhance the IAEA's safeguards system and to universalize the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement with the Agency. It is important that countries, especially those carrying out significant nuclear activity or possessing considerable stocks of nuclear material, join the Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

The third approach includes measures in the field of nuclear disarmament and security assurances to non-nuclear States. In that context, we support the re-establishment at the Conference of Disarmament of an ad hoc committee with a mandate to negotiate under the agenda item entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". We are in favour of developing a global arrangement on security assurances, in the understanding that it should take into account cases in which nuclear weapons may be used in accordance with countries' military doctrines.

We confirm the importance of establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world. We support the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. We welcome the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and call upon all the nuclear States to support it.

We consider the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to be a most important element in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are disappointed by the refusal of the United States to ratify it, which impedes its entry into force, especially taking into account that that State actively supported its development and adoption. In that context, we note that we acknowledge the importance of observing the moratorium on nuclear tests. However, to convince the world community that nuclear tests will not be resumed, it is necessary for the United States to join the CTBT and for the Treaty to enter into force.

There is a growing threat of nuclear proliferation associated with a potential alliance between weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. We thus deem it critical to enforce Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and bring about the early entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. The Group of Eight (G-8) Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, launched at the July 2006 G-8 Summit in Saint Petersburg, also aims to reduce this threat.

We advocate enhancing the effectiveness of The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We insist that all participants unconditionally fulfil their obligations under the Code, particularly in terms of transparency and confidence-building measures. It is essential to commit all countries with significant missile potential to participation in The Hague Code of Conduct. The strategic goal, in our opinion, lies in formulating a comprehensive solution to the problem of missile non-proliferation through the elaboration of a global regime based on a legally binding agreement.

Russia fully meets its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and export control regimes to which it is party, and calls on other States to follow suit. We deem it essential to ensure the universality of the BWC and the CWC and to resume work on the BWC verification mechanism.

We are concerned about the situation with respect to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Indeed, the NATO countries' non-compliance with their obligation of early ratification of the 1999 Agreement on adaptation of the CFE Treaty disavows past assurances that they desired the Agreement on adaptation to enter into force and puts at risk the very viability of the European conventional arms control regime.

Actions by NATO States — such as classifying a number of present NATO member countries under a group of former Warsaw Treaty Organization participants and exceeding key CFE Treaty flank limits by way of expanding the alliance — do not fit into the

modern situation and run counter to the provisions of the Treaty in force, as it was concluded in 1990.

The Russian Federation upholds the leading role of the United Nations in handling small arms and light weapons proliferation issues. We believe that the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons is far from exhausting its potential. We appreciate the substantive debate on ways and methods available to international society to combat illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which took place during the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held from 26 June through 7 July 2006 in New York. We regret to note the failure to achieve consensus on a final document due to the non-constructive position of a number of States.

We expect the international community to focus its main efforts on fighting illegal small arms and light weapons supplies, strengthening national anti-trafficking legislation and practices and expanding regional cooperation to find specific measures to prevent the uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons.

We note with appreciation the operation of the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms.

In our view, the Disarmament Commission, as a universal forum, should retain its function as an integrator of specific ideas and concepts, providing practical recommendations and outlining problems that call for the adoption of multilateral arrangements. We believe that the Commission's current status is sufficient to effectively promote the conclusion and implementation of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agreements.

The Russian delegation took advantage of the intersessional period to study thoroughly the outcome of the first year of the Commission's current work cycle. We are facing the complicated task of laying down General Assembly recommendations on the main items of the disarmament agenda in a generally acceptable document. We will be ready to put forth our specific proposals during the meetings of the Working Groups on the two substantive items on the Commission's agenda.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call next on the observer of the African Union.

Ms. Ratsifandrihamanana (African Union) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the African Union (AU), I would like to welcome the convening of the current session and pay tribute to all of those who, through their well-appreciated contributions to these meetings, make tireless efforts to build a world of peace, security and justice. I would like to extend my warmest and most sincere congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all the other newly elected members of the Bureau of the Disarmament Commission.

Above all, the African Union wholeheartedly supports the position of the African Group, which was presented earlier by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, current Chairman of the African Group.

With regard to the persistence on the African continent of internal wars and inter-State conflicts and an increase in terrorist acts, mercenaries, acts of major crime and violence, several decades after our States gained independence, the African Union attaches legitimate importance to this topic, which concerns us all. We remain convinced of the interdependent nature of the questions of disarmament, peace and security, development, democracy and good governance.

The African Union is continuing the actions initiated by the former Organization for African Unity (OAU) with the solemn Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU on the Denuclearization of Africa, adopted at Cairo in 1964. These include the 1997 Kempton Park Plan of Action on the elimination of anti-personnel mines in Africa, the 1996 Treaty of Pelindaba on a nuclear-weapon-free Africa and the 2000 Bamako Declaration on the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms.

Since its inception in 2002, the African Union has stressed the strengthening of its institutions and policies in the areas of peace and security and disarmament, and also coordination with the continent's subregional organizations. I would mention in particular the establishment of an African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism in Algiers, the adoption by the Summit of heads of State in July 2006 of The Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development and the January 2007 African conference on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, held in Algiers. I would also recall the adoption by the most recent African Union Summit, held in January 2007 in Addis Ababa, of a decision to endorse

a Common African Position on the review process of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent and Eradicate the Illicit Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In this way, the African Union reaffirms its resolve. It is categorically saying "no" to nuclear weapons and earnestly appeals to all producer States to uphold their commitments. The African Union also says "no" to the uncontrolled production, the excessive accumulation, the illicit trafficking, the alarming proliferation of conventional weapons and, in particular, of small arms and light weapons. These arms, theoretically used for peaceful purposes, are often diverted and are used to fuel conflicts, destabilize regimes, usurp power and carry out acts of repression. Thus, despite our vigilance, Africa remains a favoured destination for the small arms and light weapons which claim more victims daily and which increase the suffering of our populations.

However, alongside all peoples who love peace and justice, we maintain our faith and optimism, because in the proposals that emerge from our exchanges, we observe a growing aspiration for peace. We wholeheartedly associate ourselves with the proposals for confidence-building measures, for strengthened international cooperation, for renewed dialogue, for a collective approach, for an ongoing search for transparency and for an appropriate code of conduct for our armed forces. We stress in particular the need to give priority to multilateralism in the field of disarmament in order to be able to move resolutely towards our common objective.

(*spoke in English*)

Indeed, the efforts against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and conventional arms require the full awareness and commitment of the international community. We believe that, by working together on strong export controls and rapid detection of violations regarding arms production, trade and transfer, we will achieve our goal of general and complete disarmament.

The African Union underscores the importance of lasting cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations, policy harmonization, better coordination and transparency in all our actions. We further reiterate the need for strengthening collaboration among all United Nations organs, bodies and agencies involved in peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

We commend all the efforts made by the Disarmament Commission and restate our appreciation of and our commitment to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, which offers a concrete framework for intensifying efforts on disarmament in countries emerging from conflict.

We also stress the need for rapid implementation of all relevant international instruments and mechanisms, in particular the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which provides the basis of efforts to address security challenges. We welcome the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and underscore the need for its entry into force. The African Union encourages the process for the establishment of a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and a treaty on the arms trade and arms transfers.

Finally, the African Union takes this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for his initiative establishing the new Office for Disarmament Affairs. We are confident that this Office will greatly enhance support for the implementation of United Nations instruments, and we look forward to working closely with the Secretary-General and all United Nations organs.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation is taking the floor at this time just to ensure that the whole membership of the Commission better understands some of the points raised by the Japanese delegation.

Regarding the condemnation that the Japanese delegation mentioned in its earlier remarks, my delegation would like to suggest to that delegation that it should rather pay due attention to all the condemning voices of the world currently mounting against Japan. As we have repeated in many forums, with the jeopardizing, hostile policy and the increasing nuclear and other threats coming from the United States and Japan against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, my country had been compelled to build its own nuclear deterrent and successfully conduct its nuclear test. On that point, my delegation does not wish to go further.

Through its remarks, the Japanese delegation strove to give the whole membership of the Commission the very false impression that Japan is serious in the ongoing process of the Six-Party Talks. But, to tell the truth, Japan unreasonably persists on issues quite irrelevant to the objectives and goals of the talks, thus putting artificial obstacles in the way of implementing the 19 September 2006 and 13 February 2007 agreements.

The Six-Party Talks are a platform for discussing the issue of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula — and nothing else irrelevant to that issue. Japan also might be well aware of this. However, Japan kicked up a ruckus, politicizing and internationalizing a minor issue in a bid to scuttle the Six-Party Talks and to check the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

The participants in the Six-Party Talks should honour their commitments to serve the nature and purpose of the talks, with a view to realizing denuclearization of the peninsula and ensuring peace there. It is crystal clear that the talks can hardly be successful if any party taking part in the process insists on any matter that is irrelevant to the main purpose of the talks just to achieve its ulterior aim.

Everyone following the talks is of the view that, unless Japan is ordered to leave the conference hall of the talks, the talks themselves will prove fruitless and the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula will never find a solution.

The authentic nature and the true intention of Japan are solely to scuttle the Six-Party Talks and to check the process of the denuclearization of the peninsula. It is the fear of the Abe circles that the denuclearization of the peninsula as a result of successful Six-Party Talks might deprive Japan of any justification for going nuclear.

The Abe circle's theory of doing away with its post-war system and building a beautiful Japan precisely means a doctrine of domination and a theory of hegemony as it calls for avenging its past defeat — as a victimized State, not as a war criminal State — and realizing its ambition to again dominate Asia and the rest of the world.

Japan is not at all interested in the Six-Party Talks, in contrast to what is said in its statement; rather, it seeks maliciously to realize its mean and dirty aims of reviving its bloodstained past. In doing so, Japan will no longer be regarded as a partner in the Six-Party Talks. Therefore, it should, by itself, walk out of this process in a last attempt to serve and help the ongoing talks proceed properly and smoothly.

Mr. Minami (Japan): With regard to the points raised by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to underline Japan's determination concerning the Six-Party Talks. The point raised by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is groundless. Japan has been, and will be, making every effort with other relevant parties towards the success of the Six-Party Talks in order to re-establish peace and stability in the region.

The Chairman (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the Secretary of the Commission to make an announcement.

Mr. Alasaniya (Secretary of the Commission): I wish to remind delegations that the deadline for the submission of their composition of delegations is tomorrow, Wednesday 11 April, at 6 p.m. That does not mean, of course, that delegations cannot submit beyond that time. They can, but they should bear in mind that the document containing the original list of participants will be appearing by the end of the second week. Anything submitted beyond tomorrow's date will therefore appear in the additional document, which will be issued only after the session is over.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.